

THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cowper.*



THE COUNT DECLINES TO ANSWER ANY FURTHER INQUIRIES.

THE HOUSE OF DE VALDEZ.

CHAPTER III.—THE UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

THE family sat in silence for some minutes, and then Jacinta came back, looking more wild than usual. "It is a stranger," she said; "a Biscayan, I think, by his speech and appearance. He has seen Don Henrique in America, and wants to see the family, to give news of him, I suppose. What shall we do?"

"Receive him," said Don Bernardo. "Any one is welcome who brings us news of our dear nephew. We

will waive the ceremony suitable to our birth and rank."

"And no shoes on your feet! Don Bernardo, what do you mean?" cried Jacinta.

"I mean to hear news of my nephew. Of what consequence are my shoes? Did not my noble ancestor, Don Ramiro de Malaga, make a vow to go barefooted seven years because he had unwittingly employed a certain shoemaker who was discovered to be a Moorish spy? which vow he kept like a Christian knight, and appeared before kings and

princes nevertheless," and Don Bernardo turned up the dog-eared folio to find that remarkable record.

"Well, you will appear before nobody if I can help it, and no stranger shall come into this poor place to see the poverty of the De Valdez—I'll die first," said Jacinta, setting her back against the door.

"So will I," cried Donna Natella; while Rosada rose, and running to the over-faithful guardian of the family honour, said, "Dear Jacinta, do let us get news of my brother. Speak to the stranger yourself."

"May the Virgin help me!" said Jacinta, "I can never speak to strangers, for things that rise in my mind. What shall we do?"

"Let me speak to him," said Rosada, who knew her own appearance to be more presentable than that of her uncle or aunt.

"A good thought," said Don Bernardo. "It will be no infraction of etiquette for a young señora, accompanied by her duenna, to see a stranger who brings news of her absent brother. Get on your mantilla, my girl; say that your uncle and aunt are hindered by family affairs of the utmost importance, and find out, if you can, what fortune Henrique has made in America."

"Don't forget to keep the mantilla close about you, I would not for the world have that linen kirtle seen; and be prudent, child. It reminds me of the time when, my father and mother being from home, I had to receive Don John of Austria. How the prince looked when he saw me descend the stairs!" and Donna Natella would have proceeded with the entire interview, but she was interrupted by Jacinta bringing the mantilla from the next room, where it was kept in an ancient chest, throwing it over Rosada, and hurrying her out to the patio.

"There, child," she said, pointing to a rustic seat beside a dry fountain, and under a pining orange-tree, on which the early summer had called forth a few faint blossoms. "Sit down, and I will bring the stranger. This is the best place for him to see; but listen—I could not tell you before your uncle and aunt, because they are both fools—he is the gentleman who looked at you so earnestly in La Mezquita, so you must be careful, and give him no occasion for light thoughts."

With that admonition, Jacinta hastened to the outer gate, and soon reappeared, conducting a stranger, of whom the young señora could not help taking note in the shade of her discreetly arranged mantilla. She had seen him at La Mezquita, and he was one not likely to be forgotten by youthful eyes. A man in the prime of life, tall and finely proportioned, but of a more robust frame than the greater part of Andalusian señors, his fair ruddy face, clear blue eyes, and curling brown hair, which, in the fashion of the age, almost reached his shoulders, seemed to tell that his birthplace lay in a more northern clime; and yet the fierceness of the tropical sun had shone upon him with its bronzing power. His look, though frank and bold, was that of one accustomed to thought and responsibility, and his carriage, if less stately than that of the true hidalgo, was more free and independent. His dress, too, would have been a recommendation to observant ladies, for it spoke of wealth, taste, and fashion; a crimson cloak of rich velvet, thrown back as Spanish civility required when entering a house or meeting a friend, showed to advantage his doublet and trunk

hose of tawny coloured satin, his sword-belt embroidered with gold thread, and his sword-hilt studded with jewels; while the velvet hat, which he had doffed in courtesy, was ornamented with a fine ostrich feather and a pendent diamond. "At your feet, señora," he said, in Spanish fashion, as Rosada acknowledged his approach by the most stately bow she could make, at the same time observing that his accent, like his look, was somewhat foreign, and that he recognised herself as the same he had gazed on in the cathedral.

"Thanks, noble caballero. Will you honour this house by taking a seat?" and Rosada pointed to the further end of that on which she sat, for other seat there was none. The stranger accepted it, with a low bow, while Jacinta took the duenna's place between them. The daughter of De Valdez had seen no society and got no schooling, except to read her missal under Don Bernardo's teaching; but her native dignity, good taste, and good sense well supplied the place of social and educational advantages. "Honourable sir," she began, "my uncle, Don Bernardo de Valdez, and my aunt, Donna Natella, send you their compliments, and beg you to excuse their absence, for which they have weighty reasons"—Rosada took that discreet way of saving her conscience—"and also hope that you will have the goodness to tell me, Don Henrique's only sister, what you know concerning him."

"Fair lady," said the stranger, "it was my fortune and happiness to make the acquaintance of Don Henrique de Valdez, some twenty months ago, off the Honduras shore. Chance brought us to sail in the same ship, by which circumstance we became familiar friends; and when we parted, to my deep regret, at San Jago, your noble brother was well, and had thoughts of returning to Spain. I marvel he has not yet arrived, for it was the expectation to find him here that brought me to Cordova, having a kind of chaffing wager that I should one day surprise him at home; but I regret not the time and travel—no, nor the disappointment of missing my friend, seeing it has given me the opportunity and honour of this interview."

Here the sound of wheels and a loud knock at the outer gate made Jacinta start up in one of her accustomed frights and scour away in that direction. The next moment found the stranger almost in her place, saying, in a lower tone than he had hitherto used, "Let me hope, gracious señora, that this interview will not be the last you honour me with. I had the happiness of knowing your brother well, and were he here this day, he would prove that I am worthy of knowing you and your family." Rosada would have answered, but she was looking for fitting words, and an unexpected appearance cut short her search. Want of means and abundant time help people to curious contrivances. The half-closed shutter of one of the windows of the family sitting-room had been so arranged that all without could be seen, but nothing within. At that window both don and donna were stationed. The former had gradually worked himself up to a state of intense excitement. A youth of folly, and fifteen years of the dog-eared folio and the crazy arm-chair, had not improved a brain never particularly strong, and when Jacinta went off, the don could endure no longer.

"I must go myself," he cried, springing to the door; "the stranger will never believe that we are of the blue blood if he sees our niece left alone in this fashion."

"Oh, husband, consider your feet!" and Donna Natella made a clutch at his cloak. But she was too late, the don had already bounded out, and her attempt to detain him only made a lengthy rent, and added a more extensive strip to the rags of his outer garment, which her ears told her as the door closed behind him.

Though, according to the French proverb, a perfect gentleman is surprised at nothing, the visitor of that day might be pardoned for a slight start of astonishment at the figure which presented itself to him in the patio. Unshaven, uncombed, unwashed, with his bare feet fully displayed beneath his Valencia stockings, his ragged cloak girded round him, and his more ragged hose plainly visible through the recent rent, while the strip which came out of it in Donna Natella's hand flapped on the ground behind him like the tail of a discontented cat, poor Rosada felt ashamed of her uncle as she had never felt before. Yet in that guise Don Bernardo went through the entire ceremonial of introduction and welcome—no trifle with the blue blood of Cordova—inquired after the noble name and distinguished rank of his visitor, excused himself for not coming to the gate to receive him, took the place which Jacinta had vacated, and apologised for Rosada's immediate retirement, as her aunt was slightly indisposed and required her immediate attendance. The stranger, on his part, behaved like a man who understood the spirit of the French proverb. When the first momentary shock was over, he responded suitably to Don Bernardo's compliments and apologies, saying that his name was Count Eduro, and that his lineage was as good as any in Biscay.

"I doubt it not," said the don, "and all men know that the Biscayan nobles are, after those of Cordova, the best-descended in Spain. My ancestor, Don Ricardo, commonly called the terror of the Moors, was on the point of marriage with a Biscayan heiress, when he was summoned by King Sancho to the defence of Alcala, which could not be carried on without him; but, noble Count, out of your goodness please to tell me how and where you saw my nephew last."

The stranger repeated what he had said to Rosada on that subject, suppressing only certain words spoken after Jacinta's abrupt departure.

"Saint Ferdinand, the patron and protector of my family, be praised for the joyful intelligence! and thanks to you, noble count, for bringing it to our house, which, indeed, was an act of Christian kindness, for the young man is the hope of our line, and I may say of our fortunes, which latterly have not been brightened by the sunshine of prosperity, but rather darkened by the shadows of adverse fate. Noble count, though it may seem somewhat beneath the bluest blood in Cordova, whereof, with the help of our patron saint and authentic records I and my family may boast, yet let me hope that you found my nephew well in purse as in person, and bringing home, since you say he is coming, some of the gold of those western lands to renew the splendours of our ancient house, which evil days have so far impaired."

The Biscayan hesitated for a moment, and then, as if recollecting that the best report was always the most welcome to interested parties, replied, "Excellent Don Bernardo, your great experience in polished society, and knowledge of good manners, will doubtless enable you to understand how impossible it is

for me to speak with certainty regarding the private affairs of your noble nephew. But as far as a gentleman might observe the like, it is my hope that they were prosperous."

An unlucky man will catch at a straw, as well as a drowning one. The good fortune thus implied worked like yeast on Don Bernardo's brain. Mentally he beheld his nephew arriving with a chest full of pistoles, thanked the Biscayan over and over again for bringing such good news to cheer the declining days of himself and Donna Natella, and finished by warmly inviting him to stay for supper. "It is my sorrow, noble Count, that we cannot offer you such entertainment as my family were accustomed to give to visitors of your rank and merit. Our supper is not now served with a flourish of trumpets, and men-at-arms forming a guard of honour behind our chairs, as in former times; but to such hospitality as we can show, your nobility is welcome." The Biscayan glanced at the door by which Rosada had retired, and seemed puzzled whether to accept or not, when Jacinta, who had come within ear-shot, flew to the family's rescue.

"Don Bernardo," she cried, breaking out of the passage in his rear, "you forget that this day is a solemn fast in the house of De Valdez; gracious count, excuse my honoured master, his memory is somewhat treacherous of late."

"Ah," said the observant Biscayan, "we are all liable to forgetfulness at times; but I was about to say that urgent business will not allow me the honour and pleasure of accepting your hospitable invitation, most noble don: it is needful that I should hasten on my way." And after a leave-taking sufficiently ceremonious to suit the taste of his new acquaintance, with compliments to the absent señora and the unseen donna, and a request to be laid at their feet in the highest style of Spanish breeding, he departed, Jacinta barring the outer gate behind him, and then hastening in to relieve her mind.

"Of all the fools in Cordova you are the greatest!" she cried to the unlucky don, as he resumed his seat in the crazy arm-chair. "Asking a stranger to supper in such a place as this, on an olla made of salted olives and parched peas!"

"Good Jacinta, there was no danger of his coming, he is a man who knows the world—a cabalero complado."

"He is a Biscayan, and everybody knows that they can eat all that is set down, and scrape the dishes after. But my foolish head!" said Jacinta, "I am forgetting to say that the shepherd Elasco has come to pay his rent. He has put the skins of wine and the sacks of peas into the oratory, lest the Biscayan might see them. I'll warrant he would have staid if he had. I put the salt and the olives in the banquetting-hall to be out of his sight too, and the shepherd and his daughter are waiting there to see if Rosada will go home with them to the feast of sheep-shearing, which begins to-morrow."

"None of my ancestors ever appeared at a sheep-shearing; it is not fit for a daughter of the house of De Valdez to mix with peasants," cried Don Bernardo. "Rosada must begin to hold herself high, and keep aloof from such company; for, as I have reason to believe from the report of that most worthy count, her brother is coming home with a splendid fortune."

"Did he really say so?" cried the three women in a breath.

"Pshaw!" said Don Bernardo, "do you suppose that such an accomplished caballero would assert anything touching private affairs? He leaves plain speaking to the vulgar, but in my judgment he said as much."

"They say a Biscayan tells the truth once in his life, and I hope he has told it this time," said Jacinta. "But I think you should let Rosada go. The child sees little change, and a sheep-shearing is better than nothing; the shepherd and his wife are honest, prudent people, and their daughter Gulinda is a good, modest girl. Besides, I mean to go with Rosada myself. Yes, you may look surprised, but I want a breath of the mountain air; maybe it would take some of the burden off my mind. At any rate, I am going, and Manola, the cobbler's wife, whom we know to be trusty, will do all that is needful about the house till I come back, so let the child get ready."

"I think she may," said Donna Natella; "but, Jacinta, you will make them understand that our niece is to be treated like a señora; and to prove that she is one, Rosada shall have the loan of my fan—ah! the very same that I held before my face at the joust in Valladolid, when the French ambassador compared it to a cloud obscuring the brightness of the sun."

"Rosada may go attended by her duenna," chimed in the don; "and, good Jacinta, we will depend on your discretion for keeping at a proper distance those presuming rustics who cannot understand superior rank and what is due to it, even in the humblest garb. Be assured, that when our nephew comes home with riches, and the lands of our ancestors are restored to us, we will reward your fidelity."

"When olive-leaves turn to ducats, and almond-trees bear diamonds. But I must go and tell the shepherd and his daughter. Get yourself ready, my child," and Jacinta retreated, slamming the door behind her.

"She is a faithful servant of our house, else would I not permit such irreverent behaviour," said the don, who had by this time completely mounted the steeps of fortune and grandeur in his own imagination; "but my ancestors always allowed some license to such servitors as proved themselves trusty in time of need. Don Ramiro of the iron-arm did not punish a page for wearing his best doublet at a wedding-feast, but merely rose from the banquet-board and stripped the garment from the boy's shoulders with his own noble hands. In like manner, Don Julio, when he found his squire buckling on his sword-belt studded with diamonds—" Here the family records were interrupted by the return of Jacinta, conducting, in her own austere ceremonious manner, a man about the don's age, as grey of beard and hair, but less lean and lengthy, and more robust of frame. His equipments, too, were of a different order. The substantial cloak of pano pardo, a coarse brown cloth which still forms the rustic attire of Spain, the lamb-skin cap, and boots of rough leather, all gave proof of the thrifty, well-to-do peasant, thus placed in striking contrast to the idle, proud, and impoverished noble. By his side walked a girl two or three years younger than Rosada de Valdez, but not less beautiful, though at first sight one would have thought her of a different race. Her slight figure, her olive complexion, so dark and yet so clear, her glance, at once keen and shy, bright and tender, and the whole contour of her face spoke so plainly of an Eastern

origin, that any stranger would have believed he saw in her a daughter of the banished Moriscos.

"Welcome, honest Elasco, and welcome, pretty Gulinda," said Don Bernardo; "you come in good time, as indeed you have always done, bringing to us the revenues of our pasture lands, for which there is yet some necessity in our house, though it is my hope the need will not be of long duration. Sit down, good shepherd; your fidelity to our house deserves to be honoured with a place in our family circle, notwithstanding the great disparity of rank," he continued, while Donna Natella welcomed the shepherd and his daughter with a smaller display of condescension. Her niece greeted the young girl in a more friendly fashion, and Jacinta brought seats for them from the scanty furnishing of an inner apartment where her culinary operations were carried on.

Honest Elasco, as the don called him, and with good reason—for the revenue of the pasture lands, which he rather over-paid, was now the principal support of the De Valdez family—was well accustomed to the peculiarities of his noble patrons, both in manner and appearance. Season after season, for fifteen long years, he had seen their means dwindle away and their pride no whit abating. The grievous contrast of talk and surroundings did not make the shepherd laugh in his sleeve, for he was a grave Spaniard, a native of the province of Cordova, though a mountaineer, and brought up in reverence of the blue blood. But his calm, firm, and yet kindly face, which might have served a painter for the model of some ancient patriarch in the world's shepherd times, took an expression of pity which he could not conceal and they did not perceive.

The group that sat in that ill-provided room, with the sunshine of the Andalusian summer all but shut out, and the hum of the surrounding city coming faintly through the large and empty house, aptly illustrated the state of things in Spain at the period. The dwellers in cities, particularly if high in fortune and position, had a despotic government and a more despotic church, with all the machinery of superstition, espionage, and barbarous laws to fear, which might one day crush them to the dust as they had crushed the house of De Valdez. But the peasant tilling his fields in the remote valley, or tending his flock on the mountain-slope, had nothing to tempt avarice or reward prosecution. The official or priestly spy did not think it worth while to search out his rustic ways and homely doings; the yet wild country kept him safe from suspicion and its consequences. So it happened that the rapid decline of the Spanish power and nation was chiefly visible in the higher ranks, and the lower classes continued to be, as they are this day, morally and physically the strength and sinew of the land.

Don Bernardo took no note of that, nor of anything else at the time. His mind, happy in its shallowness, was so buoyed up with the fancied intelligence regarding his nephew's home-coming with a fortune, that when he had condescendingly inquired after and heard the mountain news, consisting principally of the state of pastures and flocks, the prospects of crops in the valleys, and shearings on the hills, the don reverted to his grand engrossing theme, and talked so confidently of the better days that were dawning for him and his, with the arrival of gold and the restoration of lands, that the listeners who had not heard Count Eduro's report naturally believed in the immediate appearance of Don

Henrique, fortune in hand. All but Jacinta, from whom prolonged adversity seemed to have taken the power of hope away, as it does from some characters that will not see when good cometh, leaving them like the heath in the desert. While both don and donna were giving thanks, and making vows of candles and the like to their patron saints—for being sound in the faith, as the Spaniards count it, those devout people looked no higher in their joys or sorrows; while the shepherd was rejoicing for their sakes, and the two young girls sat side by side smiling and whispering to each other, Jacinta made some dry remarks about counting chickens before they were hatched, and stalked away to her room of office. There indeed she had done many wonders in the way of compounding ollas, or Spanish stews, out of the very cheapest materials—in order to prepare a supper for which the shepherd and his daughter were invited to stay, as the afternoon was now advanced, and the hours of all countries in Europe were early then.

While these scenes passed within the Casa de Valdez, the narrow street, made up of Moorish houses with windowless fronts, in which it stood was surveyed somewhat scornfully by a young man whose attire belonged to no particular class, except that he wore the Biscayan cap, a head-dress resembling the Scotch bonnet, and was well armed and equipped for travelling. In that department he had evidently some experience. The most careless observer would have known that his birthplace had been far from the sunny shores of Andalusia. There was a northern look about his fair broad face, auburn hair, and sinewy, low set figure, to be found nowhere in Spain, excepting the Basque provinces. And as he sat upon one good horse, and held another in the shady portico of the Casa, and gazed out upon the sunburned, solitary street, he sang in a low voice a wild, strange song, in that old Cantabrian language still spoken on the mountains that skirt the bay far famed for storm and wreck, and known to mariners as the Bay of Biscay. His song ceased suddenly. There was something for his eye at last: a springless cart drawn by two bullocks, such as country people used to carry goods or travel in, came creaking down the street, and stopped at the gate of the Casa. The young man watched the people as they alighted, the goods as they were taken in, and then said to himself, "That old shepherd keeps true to his trust in all things, as my father said he would. Here comes the señor," he added, as the handsome and richly dressed Count Eduro emerged from the gate, and took possession of the horse he was holding. "Well, señor, how did you find them? Was it not as I said?" whispered the young man.

"By my honour, Lope," said the count, "it was, and twenty times worse; such miserable poverty I never saw or dreamt of in a family of undoubtedly good descent. No wonder my poor friend Don Henrique went to try his fortune in the Spanish Main; he will not bring home much I fear; he was too brave and true a gentleman for gold gathering. Yet the poor people yonder expect him to make all their fortunes. I know it by the poor old gentleman's questions; and may I be forgiven, but it went against me to damp his expectations with the bare truth, and I rather said what might encourage them. It is a pity—oh, Lope, it is a pity, to see an ancient and honourable family so far reduced. If I could have left my purse with them; if I could have done

anything to help them without offending their Spanish pride, which after all is noble, and ought to be respected, I would have done it, and it vexes me to come away and do nothing. Can your Biscayan wit devise no plan to the purpose, Lope?"

"Let them alone, master; be advised, and let them alone; you will get no thanks for your pains; nobody ever got any from an Andalusian; and what is worse, you may get into trouble. These Cordovese can make as much din over the cobbling of an old shoe as might serve for the sailing of a second Armada. If you undertake to meddle in Don Bernardo's affairs, he will raise so many questions and points of honour, and get up such a ceremony as will perhaps draw the notice of yonder gentry upon us." And Lope pointed to the Alcazar, which was now in sight, for they had left the Casa de Valdez and its narrow street at some distance behind them, and were slowly threading their way through the deserted and ruinous part of La Moreria.

"That were an honour to be avoided," said the count, casting a wary glance at the stronghold of the Inquisition. "Yet I would fain do something to help that unfortunate family."

"My honoured master, it is a Christian wish, and like yourself to think so; but for the sake of your patron saint—Heaven help my wits, I believe your honour has nothing of the kind!" said Lope; "but for the sake of your safety remember the proverb, 'It is good to keep far from the place where the plague or the Inquisitor has been.'"

"In truth, a well matched pair. But we are in no danger, Lope; I did not think you were so easily frightened."

"I know the risks better than you, master, for all your learning. You never found me wanting where there was tough work in the fair fighting line to be done; but an honest man has no chance with the black bands and their hidden ways. Believe me, many a brave and noble gentleman from your own, as well as from other lands, has come here on his travels, and all at once disappeared, never again to be heard of by friend or foe. And be advised, my master, get out of Cordova, and on your way as quickly as you can. The flying bird escapes the arrow, as we say in Biscay."

"Your advice is a good one, Lope, and I mean to follow it; as soon as my friends the leather-traders get their caravan ready to cross the mountains, we shall go with them. If you and I could find our way I should not wait for their company, but start at once to win my wager by surprising George Villiers and the rest of them in Madrid. Since Don Henrique has not arrived, there is nothing to keep me in Cordova;" but as he spoke the count glanced back in the direction of the Casa de Valdez.

"There ought to be nothing, master," and Lope glanced back in the same direction.

"You are a sly fellow," said the count; "but never mind, I must and will help my poor friend Don Henrique's family; he will come home to them poor enough, I fear."

"Well, master, if you must and will, the best way, in my poor judgment, is to send me with what ducats you think proper back to Señora Jacinta. What a scarecrow she is, to be sure! I'll say they are an acknowledgment for her trouble in opening the gate to you, or something of that sort. Every reale that comes into her fingers goes to the use of the family; I'll stake my life on that. And the sight of

silver or gold is too great a novelty for her to refuse them. But, master," continued Lope, as the count pulled out his purse, and counted ten gold ducats into his hand, "you won't go back to the posada without me? Don't think me a coward, for you know I am not: on the high seas or on my own Biscayan mountains I could find my way anywhere, by night or day; but these narrow streets and forsaken houses are too much for me, and one doesn't know what is to be met with among them."

"There is not a coward's hair in your head, my brave Lope," said the count. "No man knows that better than I do, for you have stood by me against fearful odds many a time since we came together. It was in jest that I said you were easily frightened. Caution is not a foe to courage, but rather a friend. I will not go to the posada without you, nor leave the spot, but stay with the horses in the shade of this ruinous balcony, from which fair Moorish damsels may have dropped speaking flowers to favoured serenaders in the olden time. Your own active feet will take you more quickly through those winding lanes, and it is my opinion you can scarcely mistake either the house or the fair portress."

"Not while I keep my senses," said Lope, as he darted away.

Left alone in that deserted quarter which, like a considerable part of ancient Cordova, has long ago disappeared, gardens and fields now covering its site, Count Eduro gazed around him on the silent streets and houses fast falling to ruins. "Here," he said, speaking out his thoughts, "are the dwellings of the honest, industrious, temperate Moriscos, the people of whom the persecuting Cardinal Ximenez himself bore witness that Moorish works, added to Spanish faith, would make a good Christian; and where are they?—scattered in strange lands, swallowed up by stormy seas, their homes left to desolation, and their arts swept from the land. How plainly these lifeless ruins, and still more the living ruins which I have seen in yonder once noble house—woe is me that there should be so fair a face among them!—how plainly do they speak of this land's most luckless and yet deserved destiny! Oh! Spain, thou art given into the hands of priests and friars, as Job was given into the hands of Satan; but with him it was for trial, with thee it is for sin. Thou, that hast shed blood like water, and worked all wickedness to force thine own slavery and superstition on the world, shalt in time sink under the same grievous burden, even like these decaying homes, and become the scorn of nations that once trembled at thy name." Here a step behind him made the count turn quickly, and there stood a Capuchin friar with the bare feet, black gown, long beard, and shaven head of his order.

"Save you, my son," he said in good Spanish, but with a foreign accent, slight enough to escape a Biscayan's ear; "can you tell me if there are any inhabitants in the Casa de Valdez?"

"Inquire at the Casa, or of the neighbours, friend; I am a stranger," said the count, in anything but a friendly manner, for his mood was not improved by the surprise.

"But you have been at the Casa," said the friar, stepping nearer, and speaking in a lower tone. "I also am a stranger, and have reasons for inquiring."

"Wherever I have been, or may be, I answer no questions. People who have honest reasons, inquire at the proper quarter." As the count spoke, he caught the friar's eye taking note of something, and

the latter at the same moment stepping aside into a convenient alley, made way for Lope, who came running like one pursued, and out of breath.

"Mount your horse, Lope, and let us get forward; there is a friar haunting this place. Evil spirits frequent ruins, they say," whispered Count Eduro.

"Oh, I wish your honour could speak Basque," said Lope, looking down the alley. But there was no friar now to be seen.

"It might be of use in the present conjuncture; yet one may well despair of attaining that accomplishment, seeing that, according to a tale I heard in the West Indies, the master of witches spent seven years in the study of it at Bilboa, and acquired only three words, with which slender stock, nevertheless, it is said he manages to tempt Biscayans; but, Lope," and the count looked around to satisfy himself that they were alone once more, "how fared you on your errand, and what brought you back in such haste?"

"I have faced culverin and worse dangers under your honour's command," said Lope, "but I was fain to fly from the wrath of yonder dragon in sackcloth."

"What!" said the count. "Was she so displeased at my humble offering?"

"Nothing of the sort, she doesn't see ducats every day; it was all my own doing," answered honest Lope. "You see, by good chance I found the gate open, slipped in, and made my way through that waste of a house, principally by the sound of a penitential psalm Jacinta was singing, to a room where she had a supper in hand: meagre enough it was to serve a Carmelite on Good Friday. I made my manners to her, of course, and told my errand. But what a frightened look she gave me at first! If that beauty hasn't done something worse than building churches in her time I am mistaken; but the sight of the ducats brought her to herself. As I expected, she made a deal of Cordovese ceremony about the noble family she served, and their unwillingness to let her take anything from visitors. But since your honour was so generous, she wouldn't have the bad manners to refuse, and dropped them into her sackcloth pocket. Then the señora invited me to sit down; but I, seeing nothing that could be sat on but a shelf, preferred to stand, saying I always took my ease that way, and we got into conversation. There were some things I wanted to know about the shepherd Elasco, and if he kept the venta yet; if that was his daughter that went in with him. All which she told me frankly, and that led me on to the misfortunes of the family, for the shepherd is their main stay. Many an Andalusian would have swindled them out of the pasture-lands long ago; but when I just mentioned in the most friendly manner that I should like to know how all their troubles began, and what brought the Inquisitors on Don Lorenzo, she gave me such a volley of ill names—as if she thought I was one of them—and catching up the tongs pursued me to the outer gate, from which I was glad to escape with unbroken bones."

"It is dangerous diving into family secrets, my good Lope," said the count, laughing; "but how came you to take such an interest or know so much about the De Valdez and their concerns? I thought you were a stranger in Cordova like myself."

"So I am; but your honour must know that my father was not a stranger in Cordova, or for that matter anywhere between the Bay of Biscay and the

port of Malaga. He was," said Lope, with the proud humility of a modest man setting forth the honours of his line, "I may say, without being thought boastful, one of the greatest smugglers in all the Basque provinces. There was not a free-handed captain, French, Dutch, or English, that did not know Lope Mendez. I have the honour of being his namesake. There was not an officer of customs in all the towns from Bilboa to Cadiz that had not contracts and covenants with him, and as for the noble and religious houses that looked to him for their supplies of all things foreign, their number could not be counted. I hope your honour won't think I am bragging of him over much."

"No, Lope," said the count, "bragging is not among your faults. The fashions of our pride vary according to life and land; things are honourable or not as they happen to be looked on, excepting such as immediately concern conscience or duty."

"Ah, my father was a most conscientious man. He wouldn't have broken a fast or missed a mass for the world, and so was seen, for he prospered in every run, and never had a day's sickness, till one evening when, coming home from a pilgrimage to the shrine of the blessed Saint Martina, which stands the highest of any chapel on our mountains, he met his enemy José Casago, and fell to settling the old quarrel, wherein, though he well revenged himself, my father got such hard blows that they brought on a brain-fever, of which he died—may his rest be glorious!—and we, that is to say, myself and my six brothers, being brought up to his trade, and endeavouring honestly to follow it, were so set upon by rival smugglers and betrayed by false friends among the officers of customs, that we were forced to take to other callings of an inferior sort—farming, fishing, and the like, and I went out a sailor to the Spanish Main, where it was my fortune to meet with your honour. But to come back to the De Valdez. My father had great dealings with the house, chiefly through the good offices of Señora Jacinta. He was a widower at the time, and I am not sure that she didn't expect a ring from him; at any rate, he knew a good deal about the family—more than ever his children heard—and I think something came to his knowledge that made him never venture south of the Castiles after their downfall. So you see it is not to be wondered at that I took to fishing in that sea."

From the consolidation of the monarchy under Ferdinand and Isabella, the Basque provinces have been in a manner the Ireland of Spain. Inhabited by a race whom some believe to be of Celtic and some of a more ancient origin, the Cantabrian people, whose life and times were before the dawn of authentic history, coeval with the stone period, are said to have inhabited western Europe from the North Cape to Gibraltar. For ages the Basques have spoken a language that has no affinity to any European tongue, and for ages they have borne a character totally unlike the rest of the Spanish people. Ready-witted and brave, but somewhat reckless and unsteady, given to local dissensions, and gifted with a hereditary dislike to the obedience of law and constituted authorities generally, they have given the Spanish government as much trouble as ever the sons of the shamrock gave to the British, and, it must be allowed, with far better reason. Their wild mountains, the outlying spurs of the Pyrenees, their wilder sea-board exposed to all the storms of the

Atlantic, and the cool and humid climate under which they live, so different from the rest of wind-parched and sunburnt Spain, have helped to keep them a distinct people to this day, with the fresh-coloured faces, fair hair, and substantial figures of the north. They are good Catholics as regards saint worship and other peculiarities of Rome's teaching, but a bishop never ruled in their land. Jew or Morisco never settled there, on which account persecution had little scope. The popular maxim is, that every Biscayan is a noble by undoubted descent, and the calling most in favour and respectability is that of the smuggler.

The contrabandista is, indeed, to be found in every province of Spain, and, owing to the oppressive and ill-regulated protective system which prevails in them all, he occupies a much higher place in popular esteem than ever was accorded to the goods-runner of our own country; but Biscay is his alma mater, and so it was at the time of our story. Count Eduro was well acquainted with that state of things, which, like many others existing in the world, could not jar on a gentleman of the period as much as it would on one of the present day; moreover, dashing and adventurous manhood is seldom a strict moralist. So the count heard Lope's outline of the paternal history with an amused look; but his thoughts were still on the Casa de Valdez, and as he had now reached the living and busy parts of the town, full of the accustomed bustle and gaiety which comes over Spanish cities at the approach of evening, the private talk between him and his confidential servant ceased till they reached the posada.

THE PENINSULA OF SINAI.

BY JOHN KEAST LORD, F.Z.S., NATURALIST TO THE EGYPTIAN EXPLORATION EXPEDITIONS.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

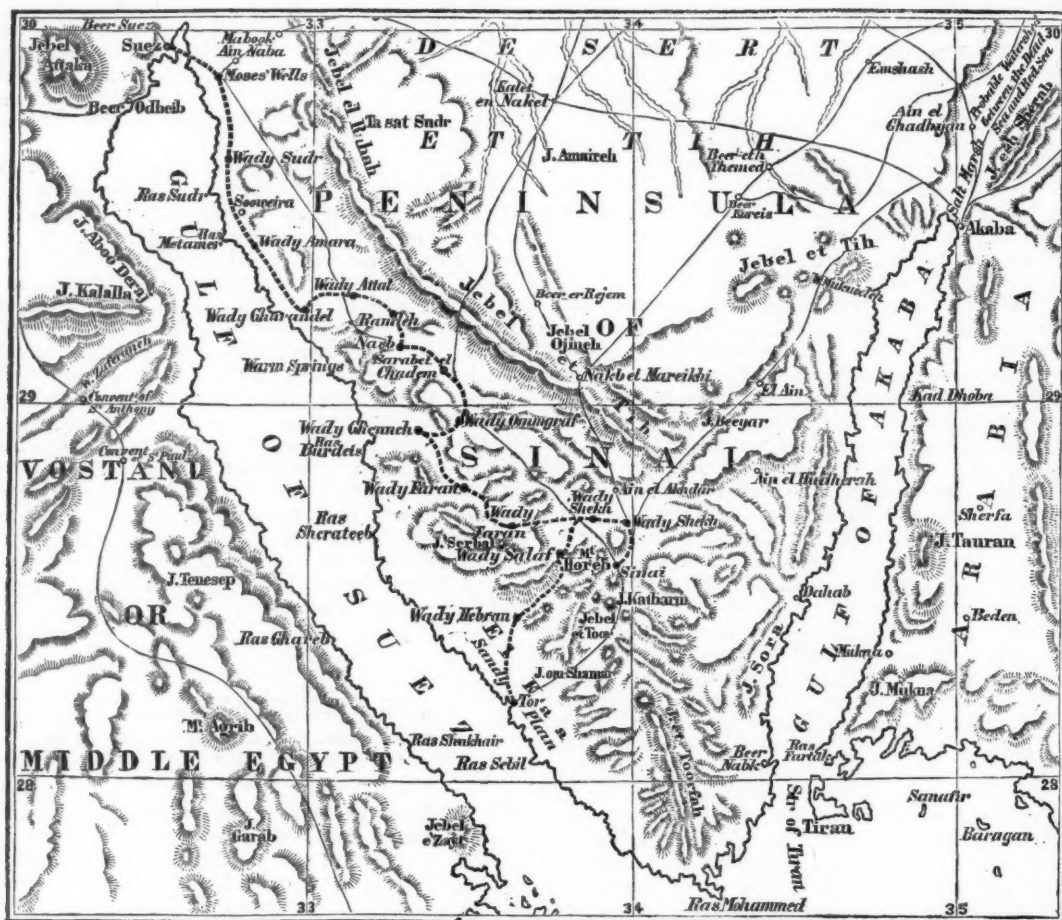
His Highness the Viceroy of Egypt was desirous that a careful reconnaissance should be made in Arabia Petrea, of the peninsula of Sinai, mainly with a view to discover coal if it was there, and at the same time to investigate the veins of copper ores which had been more than once reported rich enough to pay a fair profit if properly mined. And, moreover, it was thought desirable that the zoology, botany, and general topography of the peninsula should receive a careful elucidation at the same time. Accordingly, it was arranged in the beginning of the year 1868, that my friend and old comrade on the North-West American Boundary Commission, H. Bauerman, F.G.S., should have the immediate management and direction of an expedition, properly organised and equipped for carrying out the views and wishes of his Highness the Viceroy, and, assisted by C. Le Neve Foster, D.Sc., F.G.S., should work out the geology, mineralogy, and general topography of the country to be traversed, while the natural history department was entirely entrusted to me. This settled, it was thought expedient that a practical miner should also be attached to the party, and this gap was filled by a working-man, specially selected as being remarkably steady, thoroughly conversant with his duties, and hailing from Cornwall.

We took with us from England fitting tools for mining, and such surveying instruments as it was

thought would be required. My outfit comprised the various appliances necessary for collecting and preserving specimens of natural history, paper and other matters for drying plants, dredging and sea-fishing gear, guns, and ammunition. We also looked out for

arranged, our outfit completed, and we were ready to start for Suez in the month of March, 1868, *en route* for the desert.

Here, perhaps, will be the most fitting place to state briefly in what our travelling equipment con-

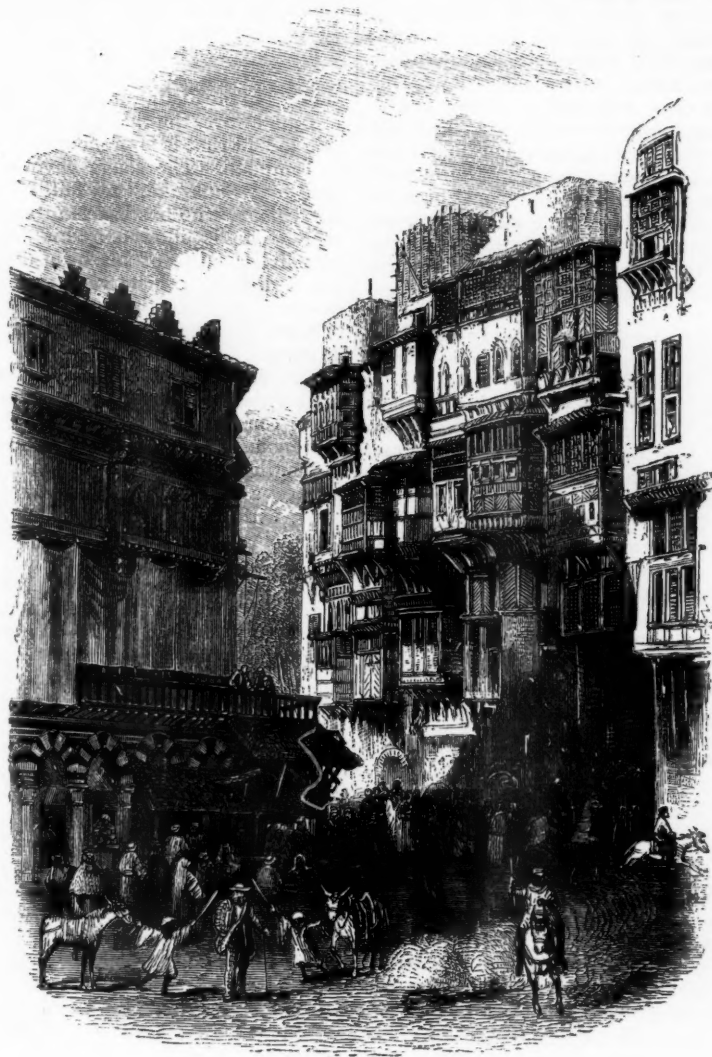


our bodily comforts by providing portable iron camp bedsteads, with bedding, iron chairs made to fold up, wash basins and canteens, a goodly supply of preserved soups in hermetically sealed tins—most invaluable on any expedition—dried potatoes, and a few dozens of brandy in case of illness, or getting bad water, to mix with it to prevent evil consequences. Anything else we might require was to be supplied us from the stores of the Egyptian government at Cairo. All our goods and chattels, together with the Cornish miner, were shipped by the P. and O. Company's steamer from Southampton direct to Alexandria; Bauerman, Foster, and myself going *via* Paris and Marseilles. I need not trespass upon the patience of my readers by a recital of the various incidents attendant on our arrival at Alexandria, now as well known as Regent Street or the Strand; but I shall content myself with stating that, arriving in due course at Cairo, we were honoured by his Highness the Viceroy with several interviews, and that everything was satisfactorily

sisted, plus the stores brought from England, already mentioned. First and foremost, we had two dragoons, both revelling in the same name as the prophet Mohammed—one, an Egyptian Arab, who spoke a kind of jargon which passed current for English, nearly as difficult to comprehend as Arabic until you got used to it; the other a Copt, who had been educated in the government schools, where he had picked up a smattering of French. This latter individual could read and write Arabic, the other could not; in this particular, we found him exceedingly useful. As escort, and to serve as a working party when required, we took with us about thirty Egyptian soldiers; they were under the command of a captain and sergeant-major. These were especially chosen because they had been accustomed to quarrying, and were supposed to be well up to boring and blasting rocks and digging and delving in general. They were consequently provided with all suitable tools for the work they had, in anticipation, to perform. In addition to this military working corps we had a soldier blacksmith,

his assistant, and a carpenter, the former provided with a portable field-furnace and tools; the latter likewise had an equipment of tools such as his handi-

inner lining of figured damask, which the sun's rays had no chance of penetrating, a grand desideratum in desert travelling. We had two extra large tents,



STREET IN CAIRO.

craft required. The medical care of the detachment, I may add, was entrusted to me. That all-important item, the culinary department, was placed in the hands of one Mustapha, an Egyptian Arab, the most greasy-looking individual I ever saw. He invariably carried three dagger-like knives in his girdle, was never known to have a clean face, and when or where he slept is a secret to this hour. His familiar spirit was a brother, a lad about sixteen years of age, who acted as scullion and poultry herd in general. All praise is due to cook Mustapha! He was a very master in his profession, and I still regard him with feelings of gratitude. The tents were issued from the government stores, and admirable tents they were, circular in shape, and having, in addition to the canvas of which they were made, a thick

one of which Bauerman, Foster, and myself slept in. The other we employed as a mess and working place. A third larger tent was appropriated to the dragomans and the Cornish miner, a fourth belonged to the cook for his stores, and we must add to these the tents for the captain and his detachment of soldiers.

It was requisite to take with us from Cairo four months' rations for ourselves and this rather formidable party of men, and to provide as well the means, in the shape of casks and water-skins, of carrying at least five days' supply of water, should it be necessary to do so, for it must be borne in mind we had to cross the desert in the hottest part of the year, at a time when few, if any, travellers care to cross it, and water might be hard to obtain. The commissariat

was made up of live fowls, turkeys, and a few geese for immediate consumption. How many cocks and hens we had I cannot tell, but I believe over a hundred pairs, butter, cheese, eggs, oranges, lemons, macaroni, "mish mish," (dried apricots from Damascus), dates, together with an endless list of trifles that it would be of no utility to specify. Then there was crockery, knives and forks, water-bottles, table-linen, and last, though certainly not least, a tremendous array of square glass lanterns, either one of which might, upon a fitting occasion, have served as a small conservatory, or have enabled Diogenes, had he lived in these days, to find an honest man in the darkest night, if the three candles they were constructed to carry inside had been lighted up; and I know not what besides provided to minister to our comforts. The butcher meat was to be purchased in the shape of sheep and goats from the Bedouins when we got into the desert.

It may by this time be very reasonably asked by my readers, how all this *impedimentum* is to be carried into and across the "wilderness." My reply is, by the "ships of the desert," the Bedouins' camels. And the necessary fleet, if I may so say, had been bargained for by the Egyptian Government, and was already safely moored at Suez awaiting our arrival. All bargains for camel transport across the desert are made with the head Shêyk, who resides at Suez, and he makes his own arrangements with the desert Shêyks and owners of camels; and as far as I have any means of judging, this so styled head Shêyk takes good care to get hold of all the money due from the Government for camel hire, and takes the lion's share before he hands over the residue to his poorer brethren, who really do all the work. The bargain, in our case, was for eighty-seven camels, which were to take the baggage, ourselves, and party wherever we desired, or thought it best, to go. Some of these, as many as we required, were to be dromedaries, or in other words, a lighter kind of camel, broken in for riding purposes, with all needful furniture, *i.e.*, saddles, saddle-bags, and halters.

In due course all the baggage and general equipments were forwarded, together with the soldiers, by rail to Suez, and we were to follow after as soon as possible, in order to complete any little odds and ends that remained to be done, prior to making the all-important start for the desert.

Having endeavoured to make my readers fully acquainted with the main objects, purpose, and general arrangement of our expedition, I propose giving an account of our wanderings. I shall do my best to relate what we saw, what we did, and how we did it, what we discovered, and where we went. It is neither my purpose nor intention to follow the usual routine of the tourist, and I shall avoid as much as possible any allusions to the controversial points of sacred topography. My route, along which I shall ask you to accompany me, will be from Suez right across the peninsula to Mount Sinai, "Jebél Musa," visiting as we cruise along the various wadies and other places of interest, and returning by Tor and the Red Sea coast to the place whence we started. I must tell my story in my own way, and shall do my best to make it interesting, amusing, and (may I say so without incurring the charge of egotism?) instructive. In any case, I promise, it shall be a strictly truthful record of all I observed and learned regarding the Sinaitic desert.

A POLYNESIAN DRAMA.

COMMUNICATED BY THE REV. WILLIAM WYATT GILL, OF MANGAIA, SOUTH PACIFIC.

WHEN I received the "Leisure Hour" for 1867, in which my paper about Captain Cook appeared, I showed the song—the first ever printed—to a number of intelligent natives. The interest thus excited was great, and led to the recovery of a curious drama relating to the distinguished navigator's visit. So far as I am aware, the thing is unique. I am glad to be able to add that it is pronounced by native critics to be complete. The songs have been carefully criticised by "Sadaraka," my faithful native coadjutor at this village, who has been in the ministry twenty-one years. He is allowed by his countrymen to be the best living critic of his own dialect. Each island has a dialect, a history, a worship, and songs of its own. I do not therefore think it wise to attempt to mend the native compositions, although hitherto unwritten.

The song is a pantomimic description of Captain Cook's visit to Mangaia. For several years after that event constant wars prevented the more agreeable employment of song-making. But when peace had at length been secured and plenty reigned in consequence, a chief named Poito resolved to give a grand feast, with the indispensable heathen accompaniment of dancing and music. A level spot was selected for the festival and carefully weeded. From one end to the other, a spacious canopy of plaited green coconut leaves protected the many hundreds present from the heavy dews of night,—as such entertainments never took place by day. Men only, or women only, not men and women, might take part in the dance and song. Poito's dance was for men, numbering it is said nearly two hundred; the entire remaining population being present as spectators and as flambeaux-holders. Twenty songs were required for one occasion. At sunset the performance began, and continued till midnight, when refreshment was taken, and once more the entertainment proceeded. As soon as the day-star appeared, the last song (reserved for the purpose) and the last dance were gone through, and the whole concluded. Six artists were usually employed to compose the songs, and to arrange the whole proceedings.

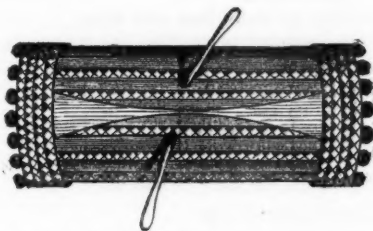
The words were slowly chanted in a pleasing though monotonous tone; sometimes by the master of the ceremonies only, who stood on an elevated platform, and sometimes by all the performers. In what is termed "the introduction," no musical instruments were employed, and consequently the dancing, which was to keep time with the music, had not commenced. The musical accompaniment consisted of a "kaara," or large wooden drum hollowed out of "miro," (*Thespesia populnea*)—a beautiful dark red wood. It was prettily carved all over, and was suspended from the neck with strong cords, being beaten, not as with us, on the end, but in the centre, the long slit emitting a considerable volume of sound.

Another sort of drum, called the "paû," was used on such occasions. A round piece of "thespesia" was dug out at one end, and the aperture covered over with a tight-fitting piece of shark's skin. It was designed to stand upright. The drum-sticks were the tips of the musician's fingers.

A subsidiary musical instrument was the "riro," or sort of harmonicon, consisting of two pieces—

of dry hibiscus wood, supported at each end by banana stalks, and lightly tapped with iron-wood sticks.

The great wooden drum used for Poito's dance is still preserved, and is used by the police in drumming their prisoners to court. The "paù" has entirely disappeared. The "riro" now gives amusement only to idle boys. But the dance itself was invariably connected with very serious evils; so that upon the establishment of Christianity, more than forty years ago, it was entirely abolished.



POITO'S "KAARA," OR WOODEN DRUM, BEAUTIFULLY CARVED WITH SHARK'S TEETH.

2 feet 7 inches in length; 11 inches in width.

This dramatic song was composed by a warrior named Tioi, who was afterwards slain in battle. It is complete in itself. It is now written for the first time; an interesting proof of the power of memory in thus retaining a song during a period of three generations. It begins with a reference to Tamaeu, who drifted here in his canoe from Aitutaki and Hervey's Island a year or two before Captain Cook's visit here in 1777.

A year was required for getting up one such entertainment, so that the number of such festive occasions served to chronicle the duration of peace. This long interval was required, first, for the making of the songs, and the rehearsal of the performers; secondly, for the growth of taro, etc., etc., requisite for the grand feasting, which is a necessary sequel to any assembly in the mind of a Polynesian; and thirdly, for the very important purpose of *blanching the complexions and fattening the persons* of those who

were to take part on the occasion. The point of honour was to be the fairest and fattest of any present.

Of the 200 performers of this semi-drama only two survive. They have long professed attachment to the gospel.

Each such entertainment was in honour of the gods. Thus if the originator were a worshipper of Motoro, all those devoted to the service of that idol would feel bound to take part. In the present instance, the dance was in honour of Tiaio (the shark god) and Tane conjointly; consequently the entire body of worshippers of those gods were performers. These gods are now in the London Missionary Society's Museum. This inherent idolatrous tendency was one reason for the suppression of these dramatic efforts.



PAU, OR SMALLER DRUM, PLAYED WITH TIPS OF THE FINGERS.

The fate of Poito, who got up this exhibition, is an instructive picture of heathen life. In his old age a battle took place, in which some of his sons fought with the father, and some on the other side. In the hour of conflict, it was Poito's unhappy fate to find himself opposite to his second son Pakuunga. As there was no retreat, the old man made a faint thrust at his boy; whereat Pakuunga gave his father a lunge, which at once terminated the old man's career! This occurred a few years previous to the landing of the first teachers.

The reader will bear in mind that Captain Cook never set foot on shore here, although very desirous to do so, so forbidding was the aspect of the armed natives.

PE'E MANUIRI.

TUMU.

Koaniia e Tumatangaroa
Ei tia i te ara oa o Tamaeu.
E kutu i te rangi.

Nga utu ake utu.
Ngu! Ngu!
Nga puru ake puru.
Ngu! Ngu!

Unuia, e Tumatangirua,
I te varo kia rauorooro,
Tamaua i Avarua,
Kia peka te iku i te matangi.
"Nako! Nako!"
"Iko! Iko!"

Tokonga kumi o Avarua ē.
Tukua maira tai ori i te vaka.
"E Bere! E Bere!"
"Maō! Maō!"

Ikā! Kua rau; kua rau
Te toa, te toa. Kua ta, kua ta
Kua ta Mangaia, kua ta te rai!

THE VISITOR'S SONG.

INTRODUCTION.

(Chorus.) Great Tangaroa,¹ assist
In caulking the canoe of Tamaeu.
Oh the deafening noise (of the workmen)!

(Solo.) Caulk² the seams,

(Chorus.) Aye! Aye!

(Solo.) Here is plenty of fibre.

(Chorus.) Aye! Aye!

(Chorus.) Grant, O thou ruler of the winds,
That the weather may be propitious,
Surfless be the reef at Avarua,³
Compel thy slave to obey.

Chorus in } "This way!" "This way!"
falsetto. } "No; that way, that way!"

(Solo.) O that vast ship off Avarua!
Launch speedily a canoe.

Chorus in } (They say), "We are Britons. We are Britons."
falsetto. } "Maī, Maī."

(Chorus.) We come; hundreds on hundreds
Of warriors to fight;⁴—yes, to fight!
The Mangaia will attack and destroy the ship.

TE KARANGA MUA.

No Tangaroa te vaka :
Kua tere i te aka i te rangi ē !
No Maio tai manuii ē !
No Tu te tere i tau e !
Koi ma ē ?
Tei tai te vaka manuii a tae,
Ouaraurauae !
Nai ua rau te vaka ē !
E manuii. Maio no toi enua ē !

Veroia !
Veroia, e Tu, te rua i te matangi,
Tirangoa te moana ia tiai.
Terō !
Tero. Tero.
Terō !
Aere mai ! Aere mai, e Beretane !

TE KARANGA RUA.

No Tangaroa te vaka ;
Kua tere i te aka i te rangi ē !
No Maio tai manuii ē !
No Tu te tere i tau e !
Koi ma ē ?
Tei tai te vaka manuii a tae.
Ouaraurauae !
Nai ua rau te vaka ē !
E manuii. Maio no tai enua ē !

Kiritia !
Kirikiritia atu tai ua manu,
E Tu, kia pārai i te tua o te manuii.
Kua ta te rā e !
Kua ta ! Kua ta !
Kua ta te rā e !
O murenga oa. O murenga oa, e Beretane !

MAUTU.

E paiparere i tau mai
No tai tuamotu e !
E pai kua oa teia ?
Ā ! e atua matakū oki.
E pai kua oa teia ?
Taau ariki o Avarua.
No Tu oki e Maī te rā e !
E pai kua oa teia ?
E pai omurenga !
Aure toa.

THE FIRST CALL (for the dance to lead off).

(Solo.) Tangaroa has sent a ship,
Which has burst through the solid blue vault.
(Solo.) Here is a stranger, Maī.
(Chorus.) 'Tis Cook, who has paid us a visit.
(Solo.) Who has come ?
(Chorus.) A boat full of guests is here.
What gibberish they talk.
(Solo.) Numberless are the boats.
They are foreigners. Maī from some other land.
(Solo.) Blow softly !
(Chorus.) Blow softly, ye winds, from your holes,⁸
That the ocean may be smooth.
(Solo.) Where are they ?
(Chorus.) Yonder, yonder.
(Solo.) Ay, there they are.
(Chorus.) Come on, come on, ye Britons.

THE SECOND CALL (for the dance to lead off.)

(Solo.) Tangaroa has sent a ship.
Which has burst through the solid blue vault.
(Solo.) Here is a stranger, Maī.
(Chorus.) 'Tis Cook, who has paid us a visit.
(Solo.) Who has come ?
(Chorus.) A boat full of guests is here.
What gibberish they talk !
(Solo.) Numberless are the boats.
They are foreigners. Maī from some other land.
(Solo.) Lord of the winds !
(Chorus.) Lead forth some bird to settle down
Upon the shoulders of these guests (*i. e.*, to detain them).
(Solo.) Splash⁹ go the oars !
(Chorus.) Aye, splash, splash.
(Solo.) Splash go the oars !
(Chorus in) They are white-faced ;—they are white-faced men
falsetto. } and Britons.¹⁰

CONCLUSION.

(Chorus.) A people of a strange tongue have arrived
From some distant land.
(Solo.) Of what sort are they ?
(Chorus.) Oh, they are a god-like race.
(Solo.) Of what sort are they ?
(Chorus.) A great chief is off Avarua.
The ship belongs to Cook and Maī.
(Solo.) Of what sort are they ?
(Chorus.) A people with white faces.
Unheard-of event !

1. Tangaroa was not worshipped here ; but, as the god of some other islands, it was supposed that he had led the voyagers to Mangaia.

2. The individual who uttered the words "caulk," etc., held in one hand a wooden mallet, and in the other a stone chisel, which he struck vigorously, as if instructing his workmen in the art of caulking canoes with cocoa-nut fibre. Upon this signal the entire body of performers, uttering simultaneously the cry "Aye, aye," drove stone chisels brought for the purpose into logs of soft wood provided for the occasion, and extending from one end of the dancing ground to the other. Canoes were "caulked" from time immemorial. This scene was twice enacted.

3. "Avarua" is the name of the spot where Cook wished to land.

4. "This way," etc., grotesquely describes the contradictory directions given to Captain Cook by the

natives as to where he should land. The "falsetto" throughout is an absurd mimicry of the language of the visitors.

5. "Bere" is a shortened form of "*Beretane*," for the sake of rhythm ; just as Captain Cook's usual designation, "*Tute*," is for a similar reason abbreviated to "*Tu*." Maī is of course the "*Omai*" of the "*Voyages*," to whom the captain naturally appealed from time to time.

6. Their aspect was very warlike ; but they wisely abstained from hostilities. The heathen of Mangaia looked upon all strangers as mortal foes to be opposed and slain, if possible. The only exceptions recorded by tradition are those referred to in this song. Tamaeu and his friends escaped because they carried a priceless treasure,—red parrot feathers for adorning the gods. Captain Cook would most certainly have been ill-treated had he landed. When his

friend Mourua found that the foreigners were after all men like himself, he slapped his thighs, and shouted with all his might—

A mate ! A mate !! A mate !!!
Kia mou ! Kia mou !! Kia mou !!!

Let them die ! Let them die !! Let them die !!!
Seize them ! Seize them !! Seize them !!!

It appears, however, that his courage afterwards evaporated.

As the stanza, "We come, hundreds on hundreds," etc., was uttered, a mimic attack was made with real spears upon imaginary invaders.

7. Hitherto no drum had been beaten, nor any dancing performed. Hence "the call" now is for dancing and music, beginning with the words "which has burst through," etc., and pausing awhile at the word "Britons." After a moment's rest the master of the ceremonies gives the "second call" in a very soft and plaintive voice: on again pronouncing

the words, "which has burst," the whole 200 performers were on their feet once more chaunting and performing the remarkable evolutions which they term a "kapa," or dance. On again uttering the word "Britons," a slight pause occurred ere "the finale" was gone through.

8. At the edge of the horizon are supposed to be a set of holes, through which the god of the winds amuses himself by blowing away with all his might, often much to the discomfort of mariners. It is hoped that he will be propitious on this occasion.

9. "Splash go the oars." At this stage of the entertainment, a mimic rowing takes place with the arms. The way in which Europeans handled oars was a very wonderful thing in the eyes of the men of that day.

10. It is interesting to find that the name "Bere-tane," or "Britain," was enshrined in the native dialect long before the first preachers of the Gospel had set foot on any of these islands.

SOME MUSICAL REMINISCENCES OF A WORKING MAN.

II.

WITH the practice of the piano I had begun the study of harmony, and wrote daily exercises in thorough-bass, making use at first of "Busby's Grammar," and then of that of Dr. Crotch. By the end of the second year I began to see my way to the art of musical composition—not however with any serious intention of becoming a composer, knowing that, looking to my daily ten hours' work, I had already irons enough in the fire. I had bought an old copy of Handel's "Messiah," and by degrees was mastering the organ accompaniment, with the intention, as soon as I was sufficiently qualified, of accepting any organist's post that should offer, even though it had to be filled gratuitously. At this time there lived in Margaret's Buildings a music-seller who was, to a considerable extent, also a popular composer of pianoforte music—most of whose works have now become obsolete, though the name of R— must still be familiar in the recollection of some of his numerous pupils. He was a well-trained pianist, and, what was more fortunate for me, was a pluralist three or four deep as organ player. He officiated pretty constantly himself at Lady Huntingdon's chapel in the Vineyards; but he also held Laura Chapel, Portland Chapel, and, I believe, old St. Margaret's Church, Holloway (Bath). Now and then he would perform at all places in succession, but the duty at the last-named three had generally to be performed by deputy. With R— I made a covenant that proved useful to us both, he giving me lessons two evenings in the week, in return for which I was bound to act as his deputy twice on the Sunday at one or other of his "benefices." I made my first essay at Laura Chapel at an afternoon service, and succeeding pretty well, continued to play there as long as our covenant endured, which was little more than a year. By that time I discovered, or imagined that I had discovered, that the humdrum practice the duty entailed was not likely to lead to my further improvement, and I gave it up accordingly.

In the interim I had dropped some of my boyish acquaintances, and made others. Among them was

a clever young fellow named A—, stunted in growth, and sadly deformed in figure, but studious and energetic, and always bravely fighting against poverty and sickness, or the prospect of sickness, which frequently confined him to his bed. He played the flute well, and was a good timist, and held the post of "second flute" in the orchestra of the Bath Theatre, where John Loder, the first of English violinists, was then the leader. A—'s salary for this duty was but small, and he had to eke out his means by flower-painting in water-colours, in which he also gave lessons to a few lady pupils. He lived with his mother in an upper floor in Kingsmead Street, within a few minutes' walk of the theatre. When too ill to attend the orchestra, he would yet work at the flower-painting at home, and many a delicate picture have I watched gradually growing into being beneath his long wan fingers, while his whole frame was racked with severe pain. His temper was sometimes short and sharp, and he would rail grimly at the twinges of pain which compelled him to drop his pencil, and then would grasp the implement again and resume his work with imperturbable calmness. Loder, who was the strictest of disciplinarians, would yet make allowances for A— when his disorder laid him up, and sometimes the apparently stern martinet would come to see after the poor defaulter—not forgetting on such occasions to bring a bottle of generous wine with him for the patient's use.

With A— I improved my flute practice. He possessed a series of Nicholson's duetts, then newly published, and these we studied carefully and played over repeatedly, until we had thoroughly mastered them all. In addition, we frequently practised the stock overtures of the orchestra, until at length, my memory being very good, I knew nearly the whole of them by heart. Being thus qualified to take my friend's place when he should be laid up, I volunteered to do so, if he thought fit. He was but too glad to accept the offer, and thus it was that I first began to play in public. My services were probably

worth but little, but never receiving anything for them, my mind was at ease on that score. I delighted in the orchestra practice, and being received on the footing of a volunteer, came and went as I chose, rarely failing in my attendance when called on—but yet more rarely attending the rehearsals, from which I was precluded by my daily occupation.

Let me here interpose one word, not in justification, but in explanation. Had I reflected seriously, I might not have ventured among scenes of license and immorality, such as the theatre too often presented. But indeed it was the orchestra, not the stage, that allured me. The passion for music drew me into the midst of this Vanity Fair, and if I now briefly refer to what I saw and heard there, it is only as a matter of literary history, such as is found in all books which are faithful records of life and manners in those times.

The whole of the Bath troupe about this time was pretty severely worked, seeing that they were the Bristol troupe as well—the same company serving for both cities. Of course, as long as my apprenticeship lasted, I could but rarely join the orchestra in Bristol; still I did so at odd times, and when my indentures had run out was able to do so more frequently. I liked the excitement of the thing, and recall the circumstances now as characteristic of a bygone time. We rattled over to Bristol late in the afternoon, being packed rather closely inside and out of post-chaises farmed for the purpose. We all knew our duty well enough—the Bristol performance being simply that which had taken place in Bath the night before, though it was neither so well performed, nor so attentively or critically received, as it was at home—the *habitués* of the Bristol Theatre being, at that time, a sad class of roughs, who, for the most part, liked the music of their own foul throats better than any we could give them. The Bristol orchestra was always empty by ten o'clock, by which time, having played the overture to the after-piece, we had rushed out of the house, and with our post-chaises ready at the door, were rattling over the dozen miles that lay between us and home. These home journeys in the dark, and sometimes through rain and storm, would have been but dull affairs had we not found means of enlivening them.

Circumstances connected with my calling severed my connection with the orchestra, which I gave up with regret. I soon found a compensation, however, in joining a glee club of amateurs, to which I became instrumentalist. We met nightly at a hired room in Miles's Buildings, generally breaking up about midnight. We were but eight in number, and our society was not exclusively musical, being also partly literary, and partly recreative. For the summer months we had a boat on the river, moored at the bottom of a garden in Walcot Parade, from whence we were in the habit of rowing up as far as Freshford of an evening,—pulling the boat over the Hampton weirs, and floating back with the sluggish stream after sunset. The good old glees and madrigals, with the accompaniment of a couple of violins and a tenor, came off grandly in the still summer nights, and many a time the small-voiced echoes, too shy to be heard by day, would send back the tender refrain with magical sweetness. On holiday occasions we would jointly victual the boat, and pushing our explorations almost up to Bradford, would pass the whole day in the indulgence of a kind of harmonious *dolce far niente*. We made wondrous discoveries of

new and picturesque scenery in the delightful valley watered by the Avon; we found hospitable cottages flowing with milk and honey, where we boiled our kettle for tea, and comfortable farmhouses, where ducks and green pease would be made to smoke on the board at our feet—at a cost which in the latitude of London in these days would appear perfectly ridiculous. Among the odd discoveries we made, was that of a cow with a musical ear; she was an undersized specimen of the Devonshire breed, perfectly white; she pastured in a field near to Hampton above the mill: at the first sound of the voices in harmony, she would run towards the boat, sometimes taking to the water as far as she could wade, and would keep pace with it in the shallows—rounding or leaping fence after fence, until she could proceed no farther, when she would stretch out her head and bellow after the boat until it was out of sight. In the winter we met thrice a week, usually supping together at the club, and varying our musical flights with readings from Shakspeare, Milton, and the older dramatists, and with discussions upon selected passages. The renown of our club got abroad, and one result was that occasionally we had to sing at private family concerts in the capacity of guests. Far more invitations came than it suited us to accept, and indeed after a few experiments we refused to accept any, for reasons connected with our perfect independence of action. Another result was that, in consequence of numerous urgent applications which could not well be set aside, we were in a manner compelled to add to the number of members until the total amounted to twelve instead of eight. The accession of numbers led in the end to the break up of the society, though that did not happen until more than a year had elapsed, and even then was not the result of a quarrel, but of a friendly difference of opinion. Of all the twelve members of this club two only, besides myself, are now alive.

Sometimes I ask myself whether the musical furore which for so many years was the master passion of my boyhood and adolescence has been of any real use to me after all. Its material results have been very small indeed. Once or twice, when employment has been scarce, the capacity of fiddling or fluting in a mixed band has procured me a temporary engagement at a poor wage; but as I never had the intention of following music as a profession, and as the demands of business precluded me from keeping up my daily practice, I began to lose some of my skill; and as I grew painfully aware of this, I became also less inclined to resume my practice after long abstaining from it. Further, I am bound to confess that about my twenty-third year I was drawn away from my musical likings by the fascination of a new hobby, for which I conceived—rightly or wrongly I hardly know—that I had a special vocation. What that was I am not going to state here; enough to say that it engrossed all the energies of my mind for the best years of my life, during which its quiet pursuit has been my greatest pleasure and my resource under the plagues and annoyances inseparable from a life of labour. Meanwhile the music that was once a monopolising pursuit has become an occasional recreation and pastime, all the more relished, perhaps, when it is indulged in, from the fact that I have relinquished all ambition as a performer, and am content to receive at the hands of others that enjoyment which it was once my greatest desire to impart.

Home.

HOMEWARD from my work returning,

Lo ! a lamp with steady ray
In my distant window burning,
Welcomed me at close of day ;
O'er the darkening fields it gleamed
And of rest the symbol seemed.

Thankfully I saw that token—
Shining on me from afar—
Of domestic peace unbroken ;
And I hailed it as the star,
Which through all my life had shed
Cheering radiance on my head.

Oh ! the joy of fireside blessings,
Children's voices, smile of wife—
Bliss of infantile caressings,
Heart-refreshing wine of life—
Purple glow of Paradise
Lingering still about our skies.

On the wall the firelight dances
As joy dances in our hearts ;
Interchange of kindly glances
Mutual happiness imparts ;
Heavenly watchers from above
Hover o'er that scene of love.

Now the long day's labour ending,
Under our own vine we rest,
And the brow of Care unbending
By Love's hand is smoothed and blest ;
One such hour may well repay
Hardest toil of longest day.

Blessed be the God of Heaven,
God of all earth's families,
Who to weary men has given
Homes of rest—sweet oases,
Wells and palm-trees, smile and song,
As to Heaven they march along.

RICHARD WILTON, M.A.

AGE OF ANIMALS.

THOUGH length of days, in our sense of the expression, does not belong to many of the animal races, there are examples of long-lived species, and of individuals attaining a very extraordinary longevity. The lioness whelps without any registrar entering the date when the cubs are born ; the bear dies in some hollow tree or cave without the day of his decease being recorded, and no decent grave is prepared for Bruin, with an overlying tombstone inscribed with the number of his years. Still, a variety of circumstances has brought the age of animals under some degree of popular observation. It is indicated also by the state of the teeth and horns in certain races, so that, in many instances, an average duration may be approximately stated, while the term through which individuals have lived is well known.

The hare, rabbit, and squirrel, if they escape the gun of the sportsman, seldom outlive the seventh year. The average age of the fox is from twelve to fifteen years, of the cat about fifteen, and of the wolf from fifteen to twenty years. The horse, in a domestic state, does

not often live longer than from twenty to twenty-five years, and the ass ranges to about the same period. Old age prostrated "Copenhagen," the famous steed of the Duke of Wellington, at twenty-seven years. But the wild horse is supposed to attain a much greater age ; and the extraordinary case is on record of even the domestic animal attaining sixty-two years. Pigs have been known to live through thirty years, but the average term is much less. The roebuck, the least of the deer kind known to our climate, seldom exceeds fifteen years. But great longevity is popularly assigned to the stag or red-deer ; and naturalists are agreed that his term may go beyond forty years—perhaps to half a century. The camel arrives at maturity in five years, lives to forty or fifty, and occasionally becomes a centenarian.

The dog is not so lively as of old in his sixth or seventh year, and has evidently passed the bounds of youth. Grey hairs are here and there upon him at the close of his eighth year, chiefly around his eyes and at the corners of his mouth. Such appearances become more conspicuous to the eleventh or twelfth year, when actual decrepitude usually commences, and increases so rapidly, that by the fourteenth year the animal is a burden to himself, and a nuisance to others. But dogs have lingered to twenty years.

The average age of sheep does not much exceed ten years ; to that period they will usually live, breed, and thrive tolerably well. But there are instances of a much more protracted age. Somerville speaks of a Spanish ram that died at thirteen years old ; and an ewe is mentioned that yeaned a pair of lambs when a shearling, had two pairs yearly for fifteen years, and produced single lambs for two years more. Particular sheep are stated to live nearly twenty years—those which the mountain shepherds call "guide-sheep," old wethers which are kept on purpose to direct the bleating flocks in the unfrequented wilds.

Cows have an average age of about fifteen years. Rings on the horns tell the number of their days. At four years old a ring is formed at their roots, and every succeeding year another is added. Thus, by allowing three years before their appearance, and counting the number of rings, the age of the animal is known. It is well for certain members of the human race losing their bloom, who are somewhat sensitive upon the question of age, that there are no definite appearances added with annual precision to their cheeks, revealing to the eye what they keep from the ear.

The bear rarely exceeds twenty years ; the rhinoceros has been known to live through that period ; and perhaps the lion, though commonly reputed a long-lived animal, does not usually go much beyond it. There are, however, instances of lions reaching to three-score years and ten. Pompey, who died in the Tower of London in 1760, was nearly an octogenarian, or upwards of seventy years old. Of all the terrestrial mammalia, the elephant seems to be the longest liver, sometimes passing the century ; and a much greater age is reported to have been attained by a distinguished individual. When Alexander the Great invaded the dominions of Porus, one of the rajahs of Upper India, he took a great elephant from the conquered prince, named him Ajax, dedicated him to the sun, and let him go with this inscription, "Alexander, the son of Jupiter, hath dedicated Ajax to the Sun." The animal is said

to have been found with the inscription three hundred and fifty years afterwards. It need hardly be remarked, to prevent full credence being given to this relation, that it rests upon the very dubious authority of ancient times, though still repeated unsuspectingly in many popular zoologies. However, the elephant, if not the king of beasts, is entitled to be considered somewhat of a patriarch among them.

The "wide-ruling eagle," the king of birds, surpasses most of the feathered tribes in his term of life. One kept at Vienna died after a confinement of a hundred and four years. The raven has also the reputation of being a centenarian. On an ancient oak near Selborne a pair fixed their residence for such a series of years that it came to be distinguished by the title of the raven-tree. But swans occasionally survive to a century and a half and even longer. The melody of the dying swan, once popularly believed, is well known to exist only in the mythology of the ancients. But as few opportunities occur of witnessing the bird's last moments, some interest attaches to personal observations on the point. One is mentioned which, instead of attempting concealment at the approach of death, quitted the water, and sat down on the margin of the pond. He soon became too weak to support his long neck in an upright position. He nodded, and then tried to recover himself; nodded again, and renewed the effort; till at last, quite enfeebled and worn out, his head fell gently on the grass, his wings became expanded a trifle, and he died uttering no plaintive sound, not even his wonted cry.

Among fishes, the carp is notorious for the remarkable tenacity with which it clings to life. In the canals of Chantilly, formerly the seat of the Prince of Condé, carps have been kept for more than a hundred years, most of them appearing hoary through old age, and so tame that they came at the call of the keeper to be fed. The pike, from remote antiquity, has been considered a long liver; and modern observation confirms this testimony of the elder Pliny. One ninety years old is mentioned by Pennant, but the most extraordinary example of its longevity is related by Gesner. In the year 1497 a pike was taken at Thailbrun, in Suabia, with a brazen ring attached to it, on which was engraved the inscription in Greek characters, "I am the fish that was first of all put into this lake by the hand of the Governor of the Universe—Frederick II, the 5th of October, 1250." The fish was therefore 247 years old, and is said to have weighed 350 lbs. Its skeleton, nineteen feet in length, was long preserved at Manheim as a great curiosity in natural history. Pike of seventy pounds weight have been taken from some of the Irish lakes, and must obviously have seen many days in comparison with those of their congeners.

The great longevity of the tortoise is one of the best established facts of this nature. One lived upwards of a hundred and twenty years in the garden of Lambeth Palace. But another is recorded at Peterborough whose age amounted to not less than two hundred and twenty years. Bishop Marsh's predecessor in the see had remembered it above sixty years, without recognising any visible change, and he was the seventh prelate who had worn the mitre during its sojourn there. The tortoise weighed between thirteen and fourteen pounds, and moved with apparent ease, though pressed with a weight of eighteen stone.

Varieties.

BETROTHAL.—If we were to elevate the promise of marriage into a ceremony of betrothal, to a position more on a par as regards solemnity with the marriage itself, should we not increase its importance in the eyes of those engaged, and so avoid many cases of broken vows? At least, by requiring evidence of betrothal in all cases of action for breach of promise we should prevent those actions from being frivolous, and ensure that the plaintiff's case might be proved without reference to voluminous correspondence. Fewer foolish promises would be made, fewer of those made would be broken, and there would be less injury done to the feelings of persons seeking redress. The sacredness of a betrothal is no new thing. There is scarcely a country where an engagement to marry is a thing of so light moment as in England. Even the ancient Romans considered it so far binding that the betrothed of a father was considered almost within the prohibited degrees of kindred, so far as marriage with the son was concerned. At least the prohibition was so important as to find a place in Justinian's Institutes.—*The Echo*.

ENGLISH AND CONTINENTAL FARMING.—Mr. James Howard, of Bedford, gives a very clear statement of the comparative position of farming in England and on the continent, chiefly with respect to the size of farms. In England the power of the soil to produce corn is maintained chiefly through the medium of restorative crops consumed by cattle and sheep. The proportion of crops in England and Scotland is one-third exhaustive and two-thirds restorative; whilst on the small farms in question no such balance is practised, the system being exhaustive. The simple object of the cultivator is the raising of corn and other crops which can be taken to market and turned into money. As a rule, the more slow, but more certain, results obtained by the scientific practice of modern agriculture, the impoverished farmer cannot wait for. Production of meat and the maintenance of the fertility of the soil go hand in hand—they cannot be separated; the more meat a country raises the more corn it will grow. Notwithstanding the large number of farms in France and Belgium, on which the proportion of meat produced is almost as great as in our own, the average amount of animal food produced per acre by the two countries in question is less than half that raised in England. Take one fact. Belgium, which has the reputation of being the best farmed country on the continent, possesses only some half million of sheep; whilst we have in the United Kingdom 35,000,000. If the whole of England were farmed upon the same principles which prevail upon a large part of the continent, meat, with our present teeming population, would, I verily believe, be at famine prices. Whilst holding this opinion, I am a strenuous advocate of allotments—or, better still, large gardens adjoining the cottages of the labourers. "Whilst opposed to the land being cut up into small holdings, I would not have it supposed that I think it desirable that the whole country should be divided into monster farms; to such a state of things I am equally opposed. I believe that to be the best condition of things for all interests when there is a considerable variety in the size of farms, so that a farmer with a family of sons has a chance of finding for them a choice of holdings suited to the means at his command. On many estates I think we have gone far enough—too far—toward the utter extermination of small farms. I maintain that even a few cottier farms, with a good orchard and well-stocked garden attached, which the industrious, thrifty peasant might look forward to occupy when he begins to decline in life, would tend to cheer him along the path of labour, and would, I believe, do more to elevate the class than all the prizes given at our agricultural meetings; and the large farmers would in my opinion be benefited by securing the services of a better class of labourers."

THE GOOD EARL OF DEVONSHIRE.—In the churchyard (of Tiverton) was a chapel built by the earls of this county, and appropriated for their burials, now demolished, where there is a tomb under which Edward Courtney, Earl of Devonshire, and his countess were interred, having their effigies of alabaster, sometimes sumptuously gilded, and was about forty years ago to be seen, and which lamenteth me to write. Time hath not so much defaced, as men have mangled that magnificent monument, which had this writing thereon, as some have seen:—

Hoe, I he, who lyes here?
Tis I, the goodle Erie of Devonshire,
With Kate my wyfe, to mee full dore,
Wee lyved together fifty-fyve yere.
That wee spent, wee had;
That wee left, wee loste;
That wee gave, wee have.

—*Risdon's Survey of Devon, A.D. 1620.*